

THE MYSTIC OF MEMORY

Was it wise, this wisdom that could never take
Joy in the moment for the moment's sake?
That with eyes backward bent ploughed on in
pain
The field of life, and reaped but ghostly grain;
Till of earth's myriads he was left alone,
Friendship a folly, love a frenzy grown?
In the gaunt twilight of a lonely land
So might some broken, strange-scrawled
column stand;
Or that one bitter pillar, backward turned
To gaze where Sodom and Gomorrah burned .

. .
Who strives with spirits, wresdes for a fall,
And hirn that calls the dead, the dead shall call.
Vain our deluding arts; all, all in vain
We kiss the pale fets we have raised again.
The more we break, the more we feel Time's
power,
Who most have lost the best-remembered
hour;
Whose searching hearts find nowhere lasting
ease,
Whether in Wittenberg or Meseglise.

^Vater-jelly'—that was the verdict on
Proust of D. H.
'Lawrence. 'Ploughing a field with knitting-
needles'—
that was the verdict of George Moore. It
was not often,
one imagines, that these two writers found
themselves
agreeing. And the literary young?—do they
read Proust
today? Not a great deal, is my impression.
They are
too busy keeping up to date to find time for
a novel in
sixteen volumes as much as six years old.
Again Proust
though in some ways morbid and *maladif*, is
highly in-
telligent and highly cultivated; probably it is
hard for him
to compete with writers who seem less
hampered in
either respect, like Joyce or Lawrence. And
again Proust
is not a manual for Communists. He can
never have had
anything in common with the modern type of

proletarian
Galahad who scribbles verse to inform an
awed world
that he is learning to shoot⁵. Proust does
not flatter the